

A professional headshot of Vincent Maphai, a middle-aged Black man with short, graying hair, smiling slightly. He is wearing a dark gray suit jacket, a white shirt, and a yellow tie with a small, repeating geometric pattern. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue and gray gradient.

Improving service delivery through public and private sector partnerships

Vincent Maphai, SAB Executive Director of Corporate Affairs and Transformation

SAB joins National and Local government to assist Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality

By South African Breweries

The Eastern Cape Local Government and Traditional Affairs, the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality (NMBM) and South African Breweries (SAB) have made a commitment to combine their knowledge and best practice skills to support and strengthen the local municipality with a specific focus on water. This work will be implemented within the framework of the Department of Cooperative Governance's (DCoG) national Business "Adopt-A-Municipality" initiative.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was recently signed by the partner in Nelson Mandela Bay, Port Elizabeth, to formalise the relationship which is expected to run over the three-year period.

The partnership is based on a shared commitment amongst the role players towards sustainable development and a common interest in the sustainability of water, as well as other areas that can positively impact communities and the business sector in terms of service delivery.

The Business "Adopt-A-Municipality" initiative seeks to foster a closer working relationship between government, state-owned-enterprises (SOEs) and the private sector in supporting local municipalities based in SA's nine provinces; and is a key component of the Local Government Turn-Around Strategy, focusing on capacity and infrastructure support.

This initiative derives from Section 154 of the Constitution, which states that national and provincial governments must support and strengthen the capacity of municipalities to manage their affairs, exercise their powers and perform their functions. Achieving this can have a positive impact on communities and the business sector.

"There is a serious concern that deficient service delivery at this level impacts severely on the efficiency and output of business and industry. The cost of business has in some instances increased dramatically due to stoppages in production as a result of infrastructure deficiencies, and employment could be affected. This is a major concern for both government

and communities.

"From the private sector point of view a well-functioning local government sector is of the utmost importance to create an enabling environment for the business sector to flourish and be sustainable," says Ricardo Hansby, Deputy Director General for Infrastructure and Economic Development at the DCoG.

MEC Mlibo Qoboshiyane, Local Government and Traditional Affairs, acknowledged this, saying, "The essence of this partnership is to help the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro improve service delivery, attend to service backlogs, attract more investments, improve infrastructure development and most importantly, to perform better. All role players - from councillors, managers and staff members, must work together to achieve the goals of this agreement."

Water is a core priority of SAB's Sustainable Development focus and is seen as a fundamental component of the business' continued success and survival into the future. At a municipal level, SAB regularly engages with local authorities to help ensure better water governance and management.

"Water governance is a strategic thrust of our water game plan to ensure the sustainability of water within communities and use by the business into the future, and we take a multi-stakeholder approach to achieving this objective.

"By industry working together and partnering with government, local municipalities and other stakeholders, we are able to more effectively address the key water risks facing the country. The MOU between us, government and the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro is a significant step forward in our work towards ensuring water resources are available to the business and to local communities long into the future," says Vincent Maphai, SAB Executive Director of Corporate Affairs and Transformation.

Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality's Executive Mayor Zanoxolo Wayile described this important partnership as a step in the right direction to ensure that the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality delivers on its mandate to provide services of a high standard to its

residents. "This initiative talks directly to the President's clarion call for the building of an effective, efficient and responsive developmental state that is run on a professional basis. Together we can do more in building sustainable communities."

Several focus areas of collaboration have been identified by the partners in taking the initiative forward and with SAB's Ibhayi Brewery, based in Port Elizabeth, taking a leadership role within the partnership. These focus areas are:

- The utilisation of SAB's water infrastructure, maintenance and engineering skills at its Ibhayi Brewery to strengthen the municipality's water pump stations;

- The identification of select process controllers from the municipal waste water plant to shadow operators at the brewery's waste water treatment plant with the objective of sharing good practices; and

- SAB has extended an invitation to officials from municipalities and local government to participate in the company's in-house project management course.

"These practical areas of work we believe will have a multiplier effect on the capability of the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality. SAB's relatively small contribution has the potential to make a significant difference," says Maphai.

The project will be monitored and evaluated by a National Coordinating Committee (NCC), which will develop annual plans with clear timelines that will take into consideration government priorities. At municipal level, the Municipal Coordinating Committee will be responsible for monitoring municipal specific programmes against project plans. This committee will report to a Provincial Coordinating committee which will in turn report to the NCC. ■

